

Remarks

In view of the above amendments and the following remarks, reconsideration and further examination are requested.

The specification has been reviewed and revised to make a number of editorial revisions thereto. No new matter has been added by the revisions.

Replacement Figures 15A, 16 and 18 are enclosed herewith. These replacement figures are presented to correct typographical errors in the original figures. No new matter has been added to these figures.

Claims 7 and 8 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. Claims 7 and 8 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer to the subject matter contained therein. As a result, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-3, 6-8 and 13-16 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Fujinami (US 5,881,203) in view of Tanoue (US 6,298,033). Claims 10-12, 17, 19, 21 and 22 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Fujinami in view of Tanoue and further in view of Hirabayashi (US 6,308,003). Claim 9 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Fujinami in view of Tanoue and further in view of Lenihan (US 6,169,843).

Claims 4, 5, 18 and 20 have been indicated as containing allowable subject matter. The Applicants would like to thank the Examiner for this indication of allowable subject matter.

In order to expedite prosecution of the application, claim 1 has been amended so as to include the limitation of allowable claim 4, allowable claim 18 has been amended so as to include the limitations of claims 10 and 17, allowable claim 20 has been amended so as to include the limitations of claims 10 and 19, and new claim 23 has been added which includes the limitations of claim 1 and allowable claim 5.

Further, claims 4, 5, 7, 8, 10-17, 19, 21 and 22 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer to the subject matter contained therein.

In addition, new claims 24-27 which correspond to claims 2, 3, 6 and 9, respectively, have been added and depend either directly or indirectly from new claim 23.

In addition, claims 1, 2, 6, 18 and 20 have been amended to make a number of editorial revisions thereto. These revisions have been made to place the claims in better U.S. form. None of these amendments have been made to narrow the scope of protection of the claims, or to

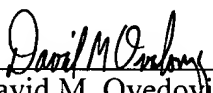
address issues related to patentability, and therefore, these amendments should not be construed as limiting the scope of equivalents of the claimed features offered by the Doctrine of Equivalents.

It is submitted that only allowable claims remain pending.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, it is submitted that the present application is now in condition for allowance. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone if it is felt that there issues remaining which must be resolved before allowance of the application.

Respectfully submitted,

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